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**A copy of this letter was sent to the authors, whose reply is printed below. ED, *BJVD.*

Sir,

We are grateful to Dr Woodcock for drawing attention to the important question of a possible effect of probenecid on the apparent volume of distribution of amoxycillin. Although he rightly points out that Gibaldi and co-workers had suggested that such an effect occurs, we would refer him to a later paper by Jusko and Gibaldi,[1] in which they demonstrated that, while alteration of elimination produces a change in the degree of equilibration of a drug between the central and peripheral compartments which affects certain apparent "volume of distribution" parameters, no change in distribution mechanisms or space necessarily occurs. After reanalysing their original data, they concluded that "the distribution rates and space of penicillin do not appear to be significantly altered by probenecid...".

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Reference

1. Jusko WJ, Gibaldi M. Effects of change in elimination on various parameters of the two-compartment open model. *J Pharm Sci* 1972;**61**:1270-3.

TO THE EDITOR, *British Journal of Venereal Diseases*

Sir,

Piperacillin

I refer to the paper by Waterworth *et al,*[1] which reported on the antigonococcal activity of a number of agents including piperacillin.

In the last paragraph of this article, it is stated that piperacillin is a carbenicillin. So as to avoid any misunderstanding, I should point out that piperacillin is in fact a dioxopiperazinylacetyl derivative of ampicillin and its structure and activity are sufficiently different from carbenicillin to make the statement inaccurate.

Yours faithfully,
Maryanne Roach

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Reference

1. Waterworth PM, Oriel JD, Ridgway GL, Subramanian S. Single-dose minocycline in the treatment of gonococcal urethritis. *Br J Vener Dis* 1979;**55**:343-7.

**This letter has been shown to Dr Waterworth, who agrees that a more accurate description would have been "carbenicillin-like." ED, *BJVD.*